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# The Story of Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavatpada

Compiled and Edited  
by  
**N. ANANTHARAMAN**



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A.No. 15683

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*Published in commemoration of the  
SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS  
of Sri Sankara Bhaktha Jana Sabha  
West Mambalam, Madras*

**Sri Sankara Bhaktha Jana Sabha**

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JAYA JAYA SANKARA  
HARA HARA SANKARA



With Pranams  
To the Great Jagadguru  
Adi Sankara Bhagavadpada

FROM

***A Humble Devotee***

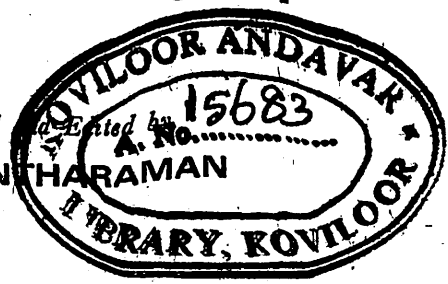
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Sri Gurubhyo Namaha

# **The Story of Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavatpada**

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*Published in Commemoration of Completion  
of Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Sri Sankara  
Bhaktha Jana Sabha, West Mambalam,  
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## DEDICATION



This book-let is dedicated with deep  
reverence to and at the lotus feet of the  
great Sankaracharyas of  
Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam.

Jagadguru Sri Sri Chandrasekharendra  
Saraswathi Swamigal

and

Jagadguru Sri Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal  
and

Jagadguru Sri Sri Sankara Vijayendra Saraswathi  
Swamigal

whose blessings we always seek.

—N. ANANTHARAMAN (Author)  
And Sri Sankara Bhakta Jana Sabha  
West Mambalam,  
Silver Jubilee Committee (Publishers)

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## PREFACE

With the blessings of and under the inspiration of H. H. The Paramacharya of Kanchi, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swaminah, the Bhagavat Pada Sabha Nagpur, had some years ago undertaken a scheme of publishing small booklets and pamphlets on the life and works of Bhagavatpada Sri Adisankaracharya for distribution to the Asthika public. Under this scheme, I had been requested by the above Sabha to prepare a book-let containing a brief life sketch of the great Bhagavatpada in English with a view to bring out later on translations of the same in other regional languages as well so that people, especially of the younger generation, will know about the great son of Bharat. The book-let in English was compiled and prepared by me and was brought out by the Datta Lakshmi Trust, Poona in April 1978.

Since copies of this book are not available now, the idea of bringing out a second and revised edition was under active consideration by me when Sri Angeerasa Venkatesa Sarma of West Mambalam, Madras, approached me and suggested that a revised version of the book may be attempted and a greater number of copies can be printed to enable a wider circulation. Sri Venkatesa Sarma is not only learned but also a great Siva Bhakta and devotee of Adi Sankara and the Acharya of Kanchi. The earlier book-let now revised and reprinted is now placed before the Asthika public.

If the book-let serves to stimulate the interest of the readers in the life and teachings of the illustrious Adi Sankara Bhagavatpada, I shall feel amply rewarded.

Madras, 5-11-1987

N. Anantharaman.

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

With the blessings of our Kanchi Jagadguru, Sri Sankara Bhaktha Jana Sabha, West Mambalam, Madras was started in the year 1961, on Sri Sankara Jayanthi Day (21-4-1961) with the avowed object of propagating the life and teachings of the great universal teacher Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavatpada. This Sabha has now completed 25 years of service to the great Acharya in the form of Gnana Yagna. A detailed account of all the activities of the Sabha has been given in the Sabha's Silver Jubilee Souvenir published in March 1987, and it is not repeated in this book due to limitation of space.

In commemoration of the Silver Jubilee of the Sabha, it was decided by the Silver Jubilee celebration committee to hold Sri Sankara Jayanthi lecture series in 25 places in the city of Madras during the Silver Jubilee year viz 1986-87 (From May 1986 to April 1987). But due to certain inconveniences we were able to complete the celebrations only by October 1987. Having completed the Silver Jubilee Series of lectures in 25 places, we wanted to publish a life sketch of the great Jagadguru Adi Sankara in English to mark the occasion. It will not be out of place to mention here that we already published a Tamil Sankara Vijayam, written by Gnana Bhaskara, Sivotkarshavarshaka Brahmasri P. N. Narayana Sastrigal in the year 1964 and again in 1974. This Tamil publication is now out of print.

The present English edition is authored by Sri N. Anantharaman, Income-tax Commissioner, Bombay (Retired), who is a staunch devotee of the Jagadguru Sri Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Sankaracharyas and is wellversed in Vedas and Sanskrit. Sri N. Anantharaman when we approached him and requested him to prepare

a life sketch of the great Jagadguru, he was pleased and permitted us to reprint this book, which he originally published through the Nagpur Sabha. We are very much indebted to him for this noble gesture.

We have priced this book, (which normally should be sold at a minimum of Rs 5/=) Rs 3/= only and this has become possible by a donation of Rs 500/= by a great Acharya Bhaktha of Salem, presently living a saintly life in Maharashtra State who on hearing about this publication most spontaneously sent the donation and blessed our attempt. In addition to this donation, amounts received through advertisements also helped us to minimise the cost to a large extent. We offer our sincere and heartfelt thanks to the Acharya Devotee of Salem and to the advertisers for their timely and generous help.

We express our most sincere gratitude, with devotion, to the great Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Swamigal of the illustrious Kanchi Kamakotipeetam, for having consented, with his usual grace in abundance, to release the book at the Kanchi Mutt, on 4-1-1988, Ardhra Darsan Day, which coincides with the Avatara star of the great Adi Sankara. We also offer our heartfelt thanks to Sri A. Sambasivam Iyer, Managing Trustee, Sri Sankara Mutt, West Mambalam for the keen interest evinced by him for the release of the book by H. H. Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam.

we sincerely hope the Asthika public will make the best use of this book and thereby make our efforts fruitful.

**ANGEERASA S. VENKATESA SARMA**  
**SRI SANKARA BHAKTHA JANA SABHA,**  
**WEST MAMBALAM, Madras-33**

# ॥ श्री तोटकाष्टकम् ॥

## TOTAKASHTAKAM

*Composed by Totakacharya in Totaka metre*

(English translation by N. Anantharaman)

विदिताखिलशास्त्रसुधाजलधे महितोपनिषत्कथितार्थनिधे ।  
हृदये कलये विमलं चरणं भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥ १ ॥

Oh Sankaracharya, you are the ocean of nectar of all knowledge and the repository of the substance and meaning of the great upanishads. I meditate in my heart on your pure and sinless feet. May you be my refuge and Saviour.

करुणात्ररुणालय पालय मां भवसागरदुःखविदूनहृदम् ।  
रचयाखिलदर्शनतत्त्वविदं भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥ २ ॥

Oh ocean of compassion, save me who is stricken with the sorrow of the sea of Samsara and grant me the knowledge of the essence of all revealed knowledge (Vedas and philosophy therein) Oh Sankara, be my teacher and Saviour.

भवता जनता सुहिता भविता निजबोध विचारण चारुमते ।  
कलयेऽश्वरजीवविवेकविदं भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥ ३ ॥

Oh Sankara Desika, you are the harbinger of the welfare of the people bringing them enlightenment through wise counsel and introspection. I bow down to you who art the knower of the truth about Iswara and Jeevatma. You are my refuge.



भव एव भवानिति मे नितरां समजायत चेतसि कोतुकिता ।  
मम वारय मोहमहाजलधि भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥४॥

I have with great joy in my heart understood that you are Lord Bhava (Siva) Himself. Save me from the ocean of illusion (maya). Oh Saṅkara Desika be my Saviour.

सुकृतेऽधिकृते बहुधा भवतो भविता समदर्शनजालसता ।  
अतिदीनमिमं परिपालय मां भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥५॥

When meritorious and good deeds (Punya) increase (and accumulate) it would be possible to get from you the great feeling of viewing everyone and everything with Samabhavana. Oh Sankara Desika, protect me who am afflicted with great sorrow. You are my refuge.

जगतीमवितुं कलिताकृतयो विचरन्ति महामहसश्छलतः ।  
अहिमांशुरिवात्र विभासि गुरो भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥

Effulgent Mahatmas who have manifested in this world to protect it go about without revealing their greatness (hiding themselves as it were). However before me here you shine in all glory like the sun. Oh Sankaracharya you be my refuge and Saviour.

गुरुपुंगव पुंगवकेतन ते समतामयतो नहि कोऽपि सुधीः ।  
शरणागतवत्सल तत्त्वनिधे भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥ ७ ॥

Oh greatest among teachers, Oh great one with Nandi the symbol in the flag (Lord Siva), there is none among the learned and the great intellectuals to equal thee in great-

ness. Oh repository of true knowledge. you who shower love on those who seek refuge in thee, Oh Sankara Desika, be my Saviour.

विदिता न मया विशदैककला न च किंचन काञ्चनमस्तिगुरो ।  
द्रुतमेव विधेहि कृपां सहजां भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥८॥

Oh my Gurū, I am not very learned or knowledgeable in any discipline - art or science. Nor have I any wealth of any kind. (Therefore) shower on me your characteristic innate compassion. Oh Sankaracharya you are my (only) refuge and Saviour.

Note: Reciting Totakashatakā is the highest worship of the great Jagadguru, Sankaracharya.

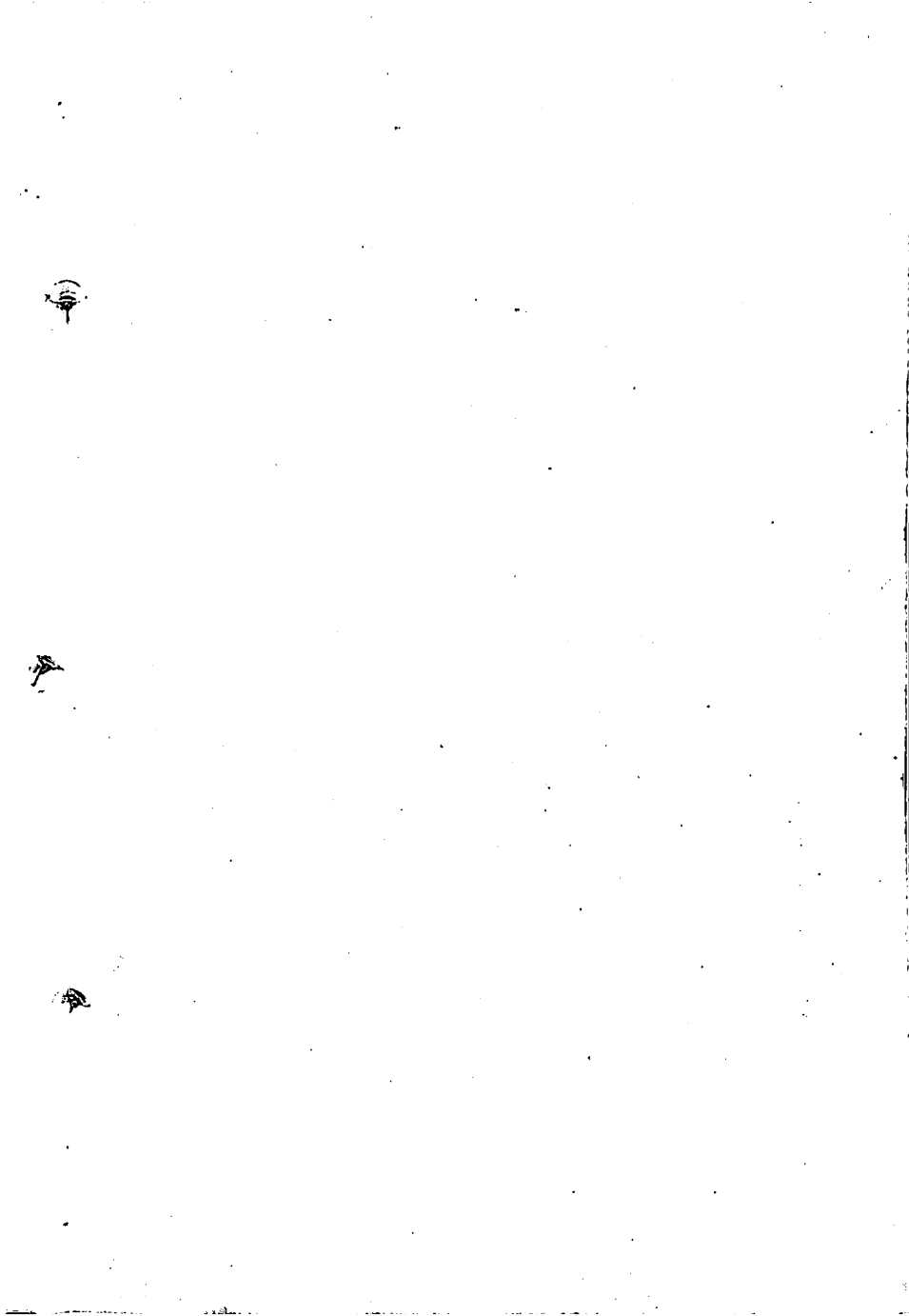
விவாஹம் போன்ற சுபகார்யங்களில் செய்யப்படும்  
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முகவரியில் செலுத்தி ரசீது பெற்றுக்கொள்ளவும்.

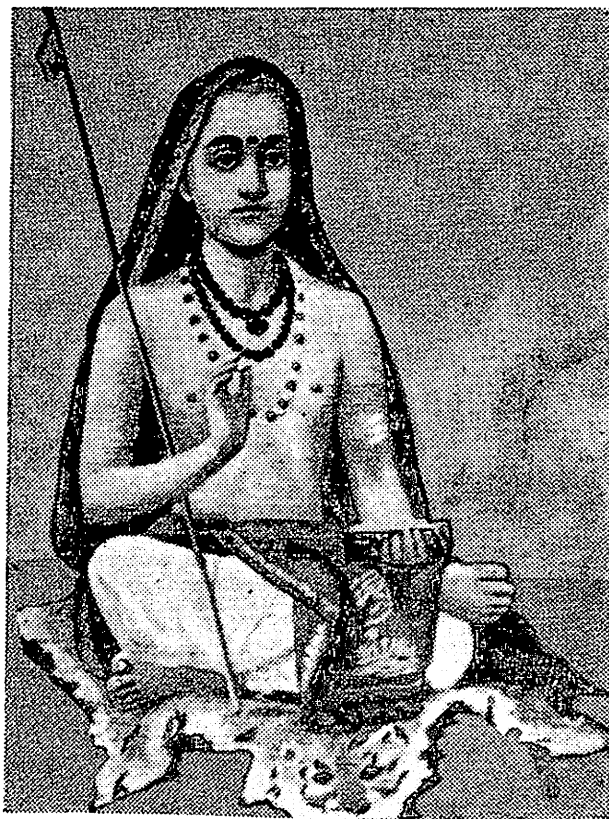
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**Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavatpada**

SRI GURUBHYO NAMAHA

OM

# The Story of Adi Sankara Bhagawat Pada

God is one. He has assumed the three different forms of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva for the three-fold purpose of creation, protection and final destruction or liquidation of the Universe.

2. In every 'Yuga'<sup>1</sup> Lord Vishnu incarnates himself on this earth (for the welfare of this world). These incarnations are called various Avatars of Lord Vishnu. Brahma and

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Note : 1. According to Hindu belief an aeon or period of time, There are four yugas Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Kaliyugas. Kaliyuga is 4,32,000 years, Dwapara is twice Kaliyuga, Tretayuga 3 times and Krita Yuga 4 times so that the four yugas span 4.3 million years. The four yugas together will form one "Kalpa" and a thousand such Kalpas will be equal to one half of a full day in the life of Brahma, the creator. It is believed that the present Kaliyuga is one of the several thousands of Kaliyugas in the latter half of the life of Brahma.

Siva however generally do not incarnate themselves in this manner. In this Kaliyuga, however, an Amsa or part of Lord Siva manifested itself and took human form as Adishankaracharya,

3 When He imparts Jnana or Knowledge, Lord Siva manifests Himself as Dakshinamoorti and is so known. Dakshinamoorti imparts spiritual knowledge not through words or lectures but by the symbolic 'Chinmudra'<sup>2</sup> of his hand. The great sages and seekers of knowledge like Sanaka attained enlightenment and had their doubts clarified by the Chinmudra symbol of Lord Dakshinamoorti when He sat in meditation under the Vataavriksha or Banyan tree.

4. More than 2000 years ago,<sup>3</sup> when this world was in the grip of the forces of darkness and atheism, and the path of knowledge was becoming obscure and dim, the celestial Devas and the sages approached Lord

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2. The thumb and first finger are shown symbolically to touch each other signifying the unity of the individual with the Cosmic.

3. Historians are generally of the opinion that Adishankaracharya flourished between 788 and 820 A. D. But several other scholars on the basis of certain records have held that Sankara lived during the period 509 to 477 B.C. Based on certain critical studies of various texts, some scholars consider that Sankara flourished not later than first Century B. C. This is also not very much at variance with tradition. Hence it is safe to assume that Sankara lived more than 2000 years ago.

Dakshinamoorti in his abode on Mount Kailasa and implored him to take pity on the ignorant humanity and to bestow on it the light of knowledge and to banish the darkness of ignorance. Moved by this entreaty, out of great compassion for suffering humanity Lord Dakshinamoorti agreed to manifest himself on this earth. To be of service to Him in achieving the aim of the Avatara, Indra and other selected Devas also agreed to assume various human forms.

5. Let us for a while turn our attention at this stage to what happened in a small village called Kaladi<sup>4</sup> in what is now called Kerala where Sivaguru, a learned Brahmin and his devoted wife, Aryamba were leading a saintly life engaged in performing various acts of merit in accordance with Dharma. Such a saintly couple were however unhappy because they were childless and their only unfulfilled desire was to have a child to gladden their hearts.

6. In Vrishachala, also known as Trisivapuram or Trisivaperur (now known as Trichur), in Kerala is a great temple dedicated to Lord Siva who is known there by the name Vadakkunatha (literally Lord of the North). The Sivaguru couple believed that if they offered devoted

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4. Kaladi is now in the Ernakulam District of Kerala State. The nearest Railway station is Angamali. Kaladi is about 3 miles from Angamali and about 12 miles from Alwaye Rly. station. A big river called Alwaye River or Periyar (Big River) flows by Kaladi and Alwaye. The river is called in Sanskrit Poornanadi and by some Choornanadi. There is a temple of Sankaracharya at Kaladi.

worship or "Bhajanam"<sup>5</sup> for a period of a Mandala or 48 days at this temple their hearts' desire of having a child will be fulfilled. They, therefore, set out for Trichur.

7. This temple has certain peculiar features<sup>6</sup>. The Abhishekam or bath for Siva in this temple is performed not with water but with ghee. The entire Sivalinga is literally immersed in ghee offered for Abhisheka day after day and in course of time the ghee has solidified and is now a huge white mass covering the Sivalinga. If one were to look at this Sivalinga against the white background of solidified ghee, one would immediately think of Lord Siva among the snowy peaks of the Himalayas. It is believed by the devout that the 'prasad' from this temple in the form of a little of this ghee, if taken with devotion, will cure even incurable diseases the devotee may be suffering from.

8 It is to such a temple that the Sivaguru pair had come to offer worship. They offered worship daily at this

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5. Taking an early bath in the temple tank nearby, observing celibacy and strict discipline in the matter of food and drink and remaining in constant meditation of God doing penance over a period of 48 days is called 'Bhajanam' in Kerala.

6. It is another peculiar and noteworthy feature in this temple that inspite of the fact that it is ghee (clarified butter) that is offered for Abhisheka, there are no ants or other insects any where inside the temple.



Vadakkunatha temple. Six times a day for 48 days did they offer fervent prayers and devout worship at this temple. Needless to say, the sincere and heartfelt devotion of these two saintly and sincere devotees moved the heart of Lord Vadakkunatha and the compassion of the Lord flowed like melted ghee. However, before giving them the boon which they had come to seek, the Lord wanted to give them a test. So one night the Lord appeared to them in their dream and told them thus: "I am very pleased with your devotion. You will get a son as desired by you, but on one condition. Tell me, do you want many ordinary sons of average intelligence and knowledge and long life or do you desire to have only one brilliant son who will outshine everybody in intelligence and knowledge and who will bring happiness to humanity but who will have only a short span of life. You have to make the choice. The couple replied: "who are we, Oh God! to choose or to decide? You know best what is good for us and the Country. Therefore, Oh! Lord! you do what is just and we will abide by your will". The Lord was pleased and replied: "I wanted only to test you. You have come out successful in this test. May you get a son who will have intelligence par excellence and who will confer great good on this entire world". The Lord then disappeared from their vision. The couple were supremely happy that their prayers were not in vain and that they had a vision of the Lord Himself.

9. Thus Dakshinamoorti, the repository of all knowledge, who, seated under the Vata-riksha (Banyan tree) dispels all ignorance and clears the doubts of seers and sages, now in the form of Lord Vadakkunatha became the light that blessed Aryamba. The Sivaguru couple returned to Kaladi. In due-course in the 10th month after their return from Vrishachala (Trichur) on the 5th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Vaisakha in the asterism Aardra which is associated with Lord Siva, the light of Lord Siva Himself assumed human form as a son to Aryamba and the divine child was born.

10. The word Sankara (शंकर) is a compound word which consists of two words "Sam" (शं) and "Kara" (कर) "Sam" meaning happiness and well being and "Kara" meaning he who bestows or he who does. The word "Sankara" means one who bestows happiness and well being. Since the Lord had appeared in the dream and he had said that he will bless them with a child who will bring happiness and welfare to all mankind, the child was named "Samkara" by the parents.

11. Having been born by divine grace, the child had a rare beauty and majesty. Anybody who had occasion to see the child declared him as a marvel and a wonder ; so

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7. Another reason for naming the child as Sankara is that he was born on the 5th day of the 1st Paksha of the second month i. e. Vaisakha Shuddha (Shukla) Panchami, the numbers being 5, 1, 2 and the name was chosen with these numbers, according to tradition existing in Kerala at the time.

unique were his qualities, features and presence. Significantly the various signs and divine weapons held in the hands of Lord Siva like the deer, axe, trident etc., were found in the form of marks and signs on the palms and feet of this child.

12. At the time of the birth of this extraordinary child certain auspicious omens and signs were noticed. For instance, in certain places, where yajnas were performed, the sacrificial fire rose up in a spiral veering towards the right heralding an auspicious event. On the other hand some persons who were either not following the vedic religion or tenets or who propagated atheism and godlessness found to their dismay that the books and authorities which they held in their hand in support of their contentions fell out of their hands to the ground signifying the fall of their false religion. Many great and knowledgeable people interpreted these omens as heralding the birth of a Mahatma or great soul in this world.

13. The child Sankara grew up. Even at such a tender age, he impressed everyone with his qualities of head and heart. His loving nature endeared him to those around him. He was initiated into the three R's at the early age of three. Rapidly mastering reading and writing etc., the child astounded everyone by being able to read and understand and even effortlessly memorise various texts and sastras by himself and also to grasp the inner significance of great works. When Sankara was only four years old, tragedy struck the family. Sivaguru, his father passed away. When Sankara was five, Aryamba, his mother, got him invested with the sacred thread for initiation into spiritual knowledge,

14. The custom in those days was that a child who has been invested with the sacred thread should go to a teacher well versed in the Vedas and Sastras and stay with him and study under his guidance till he completes his education. This was known as 'Gurukulavasa' or stay with the teacher. The Guru will initiate the child in the study of the Vedas, the various Sāstrās, rituals and ceremonies and so on and their significance and meaning. The pupil who resides with the Acharya or teacher must obey his behest and serve him in various ways observing strict discipline. The teacher on his part will treat the boy like his own son and look after him. When the education is completed, the boy would return to his parental home. During the period he stays with his Guru learning Vedas,, the boy will be known as a 'Brahmachari'<sup>8</sup>. A Brahmachari should not have any false pride or vanity. He should be humble and modest. Only then, can he learn and the learning will become fruitful. To make a Brahmachari humble without any trace of false pride the Brahmachari has to go every day from house to house to seek alms.

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8. The word Brahmachari has somehow come to mean in ordinary usage, an unmarried person or a celibate. Actually it means a seeker after truth or Brahman, a person in quest of higher learning. Chastity or Celibacy, keeping personal wants to a minimum and adherence to truth and Dharma are essential adjuncts to a person who is in quest of spiritual knowledge. A boy who undergoes spiritual training can appropriately be called a Brahmachari,

Sankara too followed this practice and as a Brahmachari underwent a period of stay with a preceptor. He also used to go from house to house asking for Bhiksha daily.

15. One Dwadasi day (12th day of a lunar fortnight) it so happened that Sankara, during his daily rounds, entered the house of a very poor Brahmin for seeking alms or 'Bhiksha'. The Sastras require that on Dwadasi day after fasting the previous day i. e., the Ekadasi day, food should first be offered to God as Naivedya and then taken. In the poor and starving household which Sankara had entered, there was nothing that the lady of the house could offer as food-offering to God except an 'amla' fruit. She had preserved this so that something at least could be offered on Dwadasi day as food-offering to God. Looking at the young boy who resembled Kumara or Kartikeya<sup>9</sup> the poor woman was non-plussed. She felt extremely miserable that she had nothing to offer as 'Bhiksha' to this divine and handsome boy. Nevertheless so great was the woman's piety and sense of charity that she now took out the little fruit which was the sole article of food in the house and which she had reserved for offering to God and offered in all reverence and humi-

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9. Kumara is also known as Kartikeya, Shanmukha, Subrahmanya. Skanda, Swaminatha. He is popularly referred to in Tamil as "Muruga". In beauty of form and majesty of appearance, Kumara is considered incomparable. He is the son of Siva, considered younger to Ganesa who is also son of Siva. The word Kumara denotes also a boy. Kumara as a boy is worshipped as the repository of all knowledge.

lity to Sankara by placing it in the begging bowl held out by him. Little Sankara was so overwhelmed by the woman's boundless love and piety, that he composed on the spot a prayer in praise of Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, and sought Her blessings on the household and on this poor woman. This prayer of the divine child could not go in vain. A miracle occurred. In the court yard of that house where little Sankara stood, the Goddess of Wealth, Lakshmi, sent literally a shower of gold in the form of small golden pieces each one resembling in size and shape the Amla fruit which the devoted woman had offered Sankara.

16. Thus in return for the love and sincerity of the poor woman, Lakshmi showered wealth on the household induced by the prayer of the divine child Sankara. This prayer composed by Sankara has become famous as 'Kanakadharastava', literally "the shower - of - gold poem."<sup>10</sup>

17. The child prodigy Sankara mastered the Vedas, the Sastras and the Kavyas or great poetic works and various other literary works within the brief period of three years and by the time he reached his eighth year he had attained remarkable proficiency in various branches of knowledge and the Gurukulavasa or the period of stay with the pre-

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10 The recitation of this collection of Verses-20 in all with devotion everyday is believed to be efficacious in the matter of removing the misery of poverty and in conferring wealth on the devotee.

ceptor came to an end. Sankara returned home and stayed with his mother for sometime as a devoted son attending on her and gladdening her heart.

18. One day Aryamba fell ill. She became weak and she could not walk about much except for short distances. It was her practice everyday while at Kaladi to take her daily bath in the Purna river (now known as Alwaye river) flowing by the village. Since she could not walk to the river which was at some distance and she felt unhappy about being not able to walk up to the river, Sankara resolved to do something about it. Through his spiritual power he made the river come nearer. The river changed its course and began flowing near the garden of Sankara's house. His mother could now bathe without difficulty every day morning in the river and she was very happy indeed.

19. One day some great sages came to visit Sankara when he was alone in his house and they told him: "Oh! Lord, the forces of superstition, ignorance and Godlessness are causing great havoc in this land. You have come into the world to restore true knowledge and Godliness. Eight years have passed since you have made your appearance on this earth. We have come only to remind you about your divine mission". Sankara replied suitably and told them not to worry and that he will be starting his life-work soon. The great sages returned to their abodes.

20. Sankara knew that his work can be accomplished only if he renounced all pleasures and comforts of the home and wandered from place to place all over the

country. No time should be lost and forthwith he set his plan in motion. Incidents which were apparently planned began to take place. The first one took place within a few days of the visit of the great sages. When Sankara was bathing in the river flowing near his house a big crocodile caught him by his leg. He called out to his mother who came running. When she saw what was happening to her beloved child she stood transfixed, frightened and not knowing what to do. She suffered great agony thinking that her beloved child would soon be dragged into the waters by the crocodile. How could the ill and weak woman rescue the child from the jaws of the crocodile? She cried out: "Oh! my child what can I do? How can I help you? I am such a helpless weakling, so powerless to do anything to rescue you". She stood there crying and wringing her hands in great sorrow and despair. Sankara then consoled her saying "Mother do not grieve. You can still help me". Aryamba could not understand what Sankara meant. Sankara continued: "Oh! mother, though I have been destined to die at a young age in this birth by being attacked by a crocodile, there is a way out. If I were to accept sanyasa by renouncing my home and kith and kin and go out into the wide world severing all attachment it is equivalent to my giving up this janma or birth and taking on a rebirth. According to our Sastras, Sanyasa is a different birth and thus I can take a different birth without physical death and the fate that is to befall me can in that way be altered and the crocodile cannot do anything to me if I become a Sanyasi. Therefore, mother, please give me permission to take to Sanyasa. If you give me this permission this crocodile will immediately leave me and I will be saved. That is why I said that it is now in your power to save me from this crocodile".



21. Aryamba was in dilemma. Should she see her son die a cruel death by being eaten by a crocodile or should her son be lost to her but still be alive and well as a Sanyasi? She had difficult choice. The mother's love triumphed and she decided that somehow whether the child will be useful to her or not as a son, his life was more important. She said "My son, I only want that you should live and be well. If by becoming a Sanyasin, you will live, then you have my permission".

22. Sankara was moved by his mother's anguish and her great love which made her deny herself the comfort of being looked after in old age by her son. Sankara knew this. Overwhelmed by his mother's great love for him he said, "Mother, even though I will renounce this world by severing all connections with all kith and kin, I will not forget you and I shall be by your side in your last moments and will perform all the funeral rites which are to be performed by a son for his parent". The mother had to be content with this solemn promise.

23. The crocodile which had caught Sankara suddenly disappeared and Sankara got out of the river. He however declined his mother's entreaties to come to the house and told his mother that hereafter the mothers in the world will be looked upon by him as his mother and all men will be to him like brothers, all girls his sisters and all houses in this world like his own because the whole world would be his house hereafter.

24. Leaving his loving mother, the comfortable home and his native village of Kaladi, Sankara started his

journey. When he had been caught by the crocodile in the Purna river he had accepted what is known as "Aapat Sanyasa" i.e. renunciation in contemplation of death and he had initiated himself into sanyasa by reciting the required mantras and Vedic texts, Now that he was saved from the crocodile, he desired that he should become a regular Sanyasi in the traditional manner after being ordained by a Guru as enjoined by the sacred texts. He walked on now in search of that Guru who could initiate him into "Sanyasa". Mile after mile, he traversed, village after village and kingdom after kingdom for many days till he reached a place on the banks of the Narmada river in Central India.

25. The Narmada was in floods and was playing havoc by overflowing its bank submerging villages nearby and causing misery to the people. By his great powers Sankara took the excess waters of the Narmada into his 'Kamandala'<sup>11</sup> and contained it in that vessel and made the river flow within bounds so that the villages on either bank and the people in those villages were saved from the havoc of the floods. A great sage, Govinda Bhagawat Pada, residing on the bank of the river saw this remarkable feat of the boy Sankara. He welcomed the boy into his hermitage and accepted him as a disciple. He initiated young Sankara into Sanyasa in the proper manner.

26. The whole of creation is nothing but God manifest. The individual living being is also in reality the

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11. "Kamandala", or "Kamandalu" is a small vessel for keeping water and is usually carried by ascetics.

miniature form of God. This philosophy is expounded in the Vedas in the form of Mahavakyas (literally meaning : great words)<sup>12</sup>. Sankara was initiated into these Mahavakyas by Govinda Bhagawat Pada. Though Sankara, being an Avatar of an Amsa of Dakshinamoorti, was himself the repository and the meaning of all the Mahavakyas, yet to demonstrate to the world the importance of the teacher-pupil relationship for acquiring knowledge and to emphasize the necessity for proper initiation of a pupil by a good teacher, Sankara became a devoted pupil of Guru Govinda Bhagawat Pada.

27. Though he was an incarnation of Dakshinamurti Sankara considered that it would be better to live as an ordinary human being and bring up humanity to higher levels through spreading knowledge rather than in the form of God who changes people to a higher form of life through the exercise of divine powers or miracles because only then can people be made to realise through a rational approach that ordinary persons can attain a much higher level of life and happiness. Therefore remaining as the pupil of Govinda Bhagawat Pada and behaving like an ordinary disciple he began the propagation of Advaita philosophy. Knowing that Sankara was competent for this work Govinda Bhagawat Pada also left for the Himalayas.

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12. The quintessence of Advaita in a terse form is given in these Mahavakyas. "Aham Brahmasmi" "Tat Tvamasi", "Prajnanam Brahma" and "Ayamatma Brahma" are the Mahavakyas embedded in Yajur, Sama, Rig and Atharva Vedas respectively.

28. In this sacred land there are innumerable holy places each having legends of its own. Among them, Kasi or Varanasi or Benaras is the foremost in importance, in sanctity and sacredness. Learned scholars in various branches of knowledge and great sages leading various philosophical schools have through the ages assembled in this hallowed place and propagated their various faiths and teachings. Thus it has been not only a holy place for pilgrimage but an important centre of great learning. Since people who were propagating rigid ritualism, atheism, godlessness etc., also congregated in Kasi, Sankara chose Kasi as a place to conduct meaningful debate and dialogues with scholars of various schools of thought and to win them over to ways of rationalism and conquer the forces of superstition, ignorance, godlessness and evil. So Sankara went to Kasi.

29. When a beautiful flower is in full bloom, the bees which are after honey flock to it in large numbers and hover around it. When the flower of learning in the form of Sankara bloomed in Kasi, people of all shades of opinion flocked around him. They were won over by him and many became his disciples. Sankara thus became Acharya Sankara or Sankaracharya a preceptor and a teacher. Since his learning and scholarship was in the service of God he also came to be known as Sankara Bhagawat Pada (or literally Sankara at the feet of God). Like the ever flowing perennial waters of the sacred Ganga, words of wisdom and learning flowed from Sankara. The people who came to oppose him in argument and fight with him and argue with him in debate soon lost the battle. Their false notions and assumptions could not survive against the cold logic and reason of the Advaita propounded by Sankara.

30. Sankara knew that his span of life for service to the world was indeed destined to be short as communicated in the vision in which Lord Siva had appeared before the Sivaguru couple during their prayerful days in Vrishachala or Trichur. So he felt that if the great teachings of Advaita were to endure it cannot be merely by oral discourses but have to be reduced to writing. Three great works<sup>13</sup> viz. (i) the Brahmasutras authored by Sage Vedavyasa several centuries ago (ii) the ten great Upanishadas gifted to humanity by the sages of old and (iii) the Bhagawad Gita, that incomparable philosophical dialogue between Arjuna, the seeker and God in the form of Lord Krishna, were taken up by him for detailed exposition. These expositions are known as Bhashyas. Based on these three main works, Sankara also wrote several other philosophical texts for the benefit of the common man. These are known as Prakarana Granthas. He also composed several poems in beautiful style with many philosophical truths embedded in them for the sake of guiding the simple folks and for leading young and old alike in the path of devotion and piety. The range of Sankara's style and language was so vast that he could express great thoughts in simple language, he could maintain a chasteness and clarity of expression and he was able to cater to the spiritual needs of the most learned as also the uninitiated in the search for knowledge.

31. As mentioned earlier, Kasi is the holiest of holy places in India. To bathe in the Ganga there and to offer worship in the sacred shrines of Lord Viswanath, Goddess Visalakshi or Goddess Annapurni and other deities there

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13. These are known as "Prasthanatrayee"

are considered to be acts of great merit even today. In ancient days many scholars in their thirst for higher knowledge went to Kasi in search of good preceptors who could initiate them and guide them. Sanandana was such a youngster who had come to Kasi in search of a Guru or teacher. He hailed from Chola Desa (Central Tamil Nadu). When Sanandana met the redoubtable and brilliant Sankaracharya at Kasi he felt that his quest for a Guru had come to an end and there was none more competent than Sankaracharya to initiate him into higher learning. He therefore became Sankaracharya's devoted disciple. Sanandana was also a great devotee of Lord Nrisimha (an Avatar of Lord Vishnu in which assuming half human and half lion form Vishnu slayed the evil Hiranyakashipu).

32. One day Sankaracharya wanted to show to his other disciples and to the people around how great is the devotion and reverence of this disciple, Sanandana, to his Guru. Sanandana was drying clothes after washing them on the bank of the river Ganga. Across the river on the opposite bank Sankara himself was seated giving discourses on learned topics. Suddenly in the midst of his talk Sankara shouted "O! Sanandana! come here immediately and bring some dry clothes. My clothes have become wet" Sanandana heard this shout across the river. That there was a river to cross did not enter his thoughts even for a moment. He ran across the river as if it was firm ground. He did not pause to consider that he had to take a boat to cross the river. So great was his devotion. Miracle of miracles, when Sanandana ran without caring whether he was on land or water and across the river, he did not sink into the water. Instead wherever his feet touched

down on the river surface, giant lotus flowers sprang up instantaneously to receive the tread of his feet. He brought the clothes to the Master and handed them over to him. And only then did he realise that he had not run on firm ground but had crossed a river running across it. Since he was so engrossed with what his Guru had ordered, his mind was not on anything else except how to carry out the Master's behest. No wonder when everybody expressed great wonder and appreciation at Sanandana's spiritual power in walking across the river, he replied humbly turning to Sankara: "Oh! Master! you who are capable of transporting people easily across the ocean of sorrow and birth and death, is this a great feat for you to perform? It is nothing but your blessings that was responsible for my crossing the river on foot with the same ease as walking across land". Since lotus flowers supported his feet in the crossing of the Ganga, from then onwards Sanandana came to be known as Padmapada or the one with the lotus feet.

33. One day when Sankara was going towards the Viswanatha temple with his disciples, after having taken bath in the Ganga, a man and his wife who looked like people of a low caste and considered to be untouchable in those days were coming towards them on the same road. The man and his wife were accompanied by four dogs also. Seeing them, the disciples of Sankara and others accompanying him shouted and asked the pair to get away from the path obviously implying that they were unclean and untouchable and hence should not walk the same path as holy men. Hearing this, the man laughed derisively and replied: "You people talk big, that everything and everybody is a manifestation of God and then you flout your

own theories and principles by asking us to get out of your way because we belong to a lower community. Are we not as much the manifestation of God as you? Even though we have separate bodies, don't you think that the same God is in the inner core of our being? This great Acharya advises that we should not think of people as those with mere physical bodies but we should see God in them. If that be so, how can you ask that we should remove our physical presence from near your bodies. If, on the other hand, it is not the physical bodies that we have to remove from your presence but the presence of the God within us how can that be done". To this thought-provoking query given in an apparently flippant and half derisive manner the disciples of Sankara had no answer. Sankaracharya saw their predicament. He knew that the persons standing before him were no ordinary persons of low caste but were Lord Viswanatha and his consort, Visalakshi, in human form come personally to expound the truth to the doubting persons. He composed on the spot five verses called 'Manisha Panchakam' in praise of the divine couple who came in such lowly form to reveal the truth. Gone were the couple and Lord Viswanatha and Goddess Visalakshi revealed their true forms before the Acharya in divine glory and the dogs had disappeared and in their place the four Vedas manifested themselves before Sankaracharya.

34. This was a great lesson to the disciples of Sankaracharya. They learnt that knowledge knows no barrier of caste or creed and that God dwells in everyone high and low. Lord Viswanatha told Sankara: "I have thought of enacting this play before you to demonstrate to you and to your disciples that it is not merely enough to lecture on



Vedanta, but it is very much necessary to practice the principles of Vedanta in actual life". He blessed Sankaracharya and disappeared from view.

35. Sankaracharya was approaching his 16th year. One day a very old brahmin came for a dialogue with him. His criticism was mainly directed against Sankara's commentary on Vyasa's Brahmasutras. By logical and rational arguments Sankara demolished the various theories and arguments put forward by the learned man, but the old man was not to be easily vanquished. The arguments and counter arguments went on and on and the debate lasted for several days. Sankara then began wondering as to who this old man could be who could so competently argue days on and on Vedanta. Padmapada, the disciple of Sankara, who was watching also wondered. With his highly evolved spiritual powers aided by reverence for his Guru he could discern and recognise who the old man was. It was none other than the author of the Brahmasutras, Maharshi Vedavyasa himself in person disguised as an old man to test the strength of the arguments and faith and knowledge of Sankara. Bhagavan Vedavyasa who is considered to be an Avatara of Vishnu<sup>14</sup> could be recognised by Padmapada who was himself an incarnation of an amsa of Vishnu. Sankara realised the true identity of this old man and bowed to him saying "Oh! Great Sage! I have committed a great sin by arguing with the very author of the Brahmasutras. Please forgive my impertinence." Sage

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14. Please refer to the verse.

व्यासाय विष्णु रूपाय व्यास रूपाय विष्णवे ।

नमो वै ब्रह्मनिष्ठये वासिष्ठाय नमो नमः ॥

Vedavyasa smiled and said : "I was not sure whether you will at all agree to enter into a debate with me on Vedanta had I revealed my true identity and therefore I have disguised as an old man. It was done only to find out how you will meet false arguments and present the correct interpretation of the Brahmasutras. Be assured that interpretations and expositions that you have given are the correct ones which reveal and explain the truth. You should propagate this throughout the length and breadth of this land. To-day you are completing your 16th year but your life span will not be over. You have been given a further span of sixteen years of earthly existence by Lord Brahma himself. And I am happy to convey to you this happy news. Spread the light of knowledge throughout the land and may you be crowned with success". Saying this the old man departed.

36. Having known the desire of Vedavyasa that the eternal teachings of Vedanta have to be propagated, Sankara now set out from Kasi on his travels which would take him to many places all over India.

37. When he came to Prayaga near Allahabad he had a desire to see the great scholar called 'Kumarilabhata' who was immolating himself in a slow-burning fire. Kumarilabhata was a leader of a band of scholars who propounded the "Karma Mimamsa". The Buddhists did not believe in Karmas or rituals ordained by Vedas or sanctioned by Vedas. Kumarilabhata wanted to defeat the Buddhist scholars and to restore the importance of vedic ceremonies. For this, he thought it would be necessary to disguise himself as a Buddhist monk moving among them as one among them and then knowing the various lines of Buddhist thought and afterwards to find

out ways of demolishing the Buddhist philosophy and arguments. Accordingly he had disguised himself as a Buddhist and learnt the Buddhist tenets and teachings. After having learnt them he started criticising these tenets and teachings by forceful arguments in order to restore the supremacy of Vedic Karmas. One day, however, he felt great remorse. He thought, "These Buddhists had treated me as one among themselves, and they had taught me their innermost secrets. I put on their garb and now I am doing great injustice to them and have deceived them". To atone for such type of deceit the Sastras have ordained that one should immolate himself in a slow fire which required one's body being immersed in a heap of grain husk, and the husk to be set fire to and the body be burnt with the husk which burns only slowly. Thus inch by inch one should die for such deception. It was thus that Kumarilabhattacharya was immolating himself in a slow fire. Sankara came to hear about this ordeal of repentance and came to him and addressed him: "Revered Kumarila, you have taken great pains in understanding and knowing the tenets of Buddhism and in vanquishing their theories and reestablishing the supremacy of vedic karmas. However, you should realise that mere rituals and ceremonies cannot yield any results. All karmas should be founded on and should be inspired and backed by the Supreme knowledge and dedicated to the Supreme Being or God. Otherwise mere performance of Vedic Karma becomes an empty ritual and serves no purpose. You should realise that knowledge alone can lead to the realisation of God and ultimate bliss". During his last moments Kumarilabhattacharya heard the persuasive logic of Sankara and realised the truth of Vedanta.

38 Sankara thought that in order to establish the supremacy of the Advaita philosophy he has now to vanquish in argument and debate a reputed scholar by name Mandana Misra, who was at that time staying in a town called Mahishmati on the banks of the Narmada River. Thither Sankara went. In that town so famous was Mandana Misra and so wide spread was the learning even among the ordinary people that even parrots in cages in the houses could talk at length on the supremacy of the 'Karma Mimamsa' theory which was preached by Mandana Misra. When Sankara went to the house of Mandana Misra, the main entrance was closed as Mandana Misra was performing a Shraddha ceremony inside the house. However, Sankara managed to enter the house by means of his spiritual powers even when the doors remained closed. When Mandana Misra saw Sankara he was very

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15. The followers of this theory believed in the supremacy of the Vedas and considered that the various austerities and karmas ordained therein must be performed strictly following the procedures laid down. They did not believe in any fundamental truth beyond these. However Sankara while accepting the supremacy of the Vedas, considered that Vedas contained not merely prescriptions for performance of various ceremonies calculated to confer material and other benefits but it was a vast treasure-house of knowledge and by rational thinking and introspection the great fundamental truths dealt with in the Jnana Kanda of the Vedas can be realised leading to much higher form of life.

annoyed and angry but Sankara very calmly replied to variout queries of Mandana Misra and even laughed and cut a few jokes. Mandana Misra who was a great and learned man himself could, even though angry, grasp the significance of the home truths given by Sankara in the half humorous manner. He therefore desired to start a debate with Sankara to which Sankara agreed.

39. So after the Shraddh ceremony was over, the stage was set for the debate. Mandana Misra wanted to have a competent judge and observer to finally arbitrate on disputed points. Sankara suggested that Mandana Misra's own wife, Sarasavani by name<sup>16</sup> a scholar in her own right, could be the arbitrator, observer and judge. Mandana Misra agreed to the suggestion but his wife hesitated. She was really an incarnation of Saraswati, the Goddess of learning in human form. That being so she could immediately recognise that the person who had come in the form of Sankara was none other than Lord Dakshina-moorti himself. She knew that her husband would be defeated in the arguments. She was perplexed as to how a devoted wife should give verdict against her husband. Therefore, she gave two special type of garlands one to each of the two participants and suggested that they put the garlands round their necks. She indicated that the flowers of the garland would fade if the person wearing that garland was defeated in the arguments and the defeat should be gracefully accepted by that person. The debate began.

40. After a marathon debate the garland around the neck of Mandana Misra faded signifying his defeat. His

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16. Certain texts refer to her as Ubhayabharati also,

wife Sarasawani became sad at this. She was also perturbed at the outcome of the debate for another reason. It had been agreed before the debate that if Sankara were to be defeated he should give up sanyasa, get married and become a householder<sup>17</sup> and be a disciple of Mandana Misra. If, on the other hand, Mandana Misra were to be defeated, he, who was a householder already, should renounce all worldly pleasures and accept sanyasa and become Sankara's disciple. True to his promise Mandana Misra indicated his readiness to accept Sanyasa and accompany Sankara on his travels. His wife Sarasawani was extremely unhappy because of this but she composed herself and standing before Sankara said "Oh! Great one, you are well aware that the Sastras consider a husband and wife to be an inseparable unit and that they are only one though they may have two separate physical bodies. Therefore now you have actually won your debate over only half of us. The remaining half, i. e. myself, has also to be defeated before you can claim complete victory over Mandana Misra. Sankara was pleased at this clever argument and consented to continue the debate with Sarasawani. Her eloquence and erudition, her sharp intellect and daring questions would have floored any one, but pitted against the incomparable Sankara she had finally to concede victory to him.

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17. The Karma Mimamsa followers considered that renouncing the world by becoming a Sanyasin and thereby not performing any of the great karmas ordained by the Vedas is not proper but what is required is one should become a householder accepting the various responsibilities of family life and perform the Vedic ceremonies and austerities.

Being an Avatara of Saraswati, she now prepared to return to Satyaloka from where she had come, leaving this earth. But Sankara cast a spell on her by chanting the Vana-durga<sup>18</sup> mantra so that she could not carry out her resolve to go away. Sankara said to her: "Oh! Mother! it is not yet time for you to leave this world. There are many great things for you to accomplish in this world still and your life's mission is not complete."

41. Mandana Misra who accepted sanyasa became Sankara's disciple and assumed the name of Sureswara. When Mandana's disciples and followers came to know how Mandana accepted Sanyasa and had become a disciple of Sankara, they also renounced the karma path which they were following and accepted the path of knowledge expounded by Sankara. Thus Sankara's teachings that performance of karma was necessary only upto a certain stage and thereafter it was knowledge absolute that was necessary came to be accepted very widely.

42. Sankara brought about a change in the attitude of those following Bhaktimarga or the path of devotion also. People were worshipping various deities and each claimed that the deity he worshipped was superior and more powerful than the other deities. Thus unseemly rivalries, petty-mindedness and narrow sectarianism had corroded the minds of the followers of Bhaktimarga. Sankara

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18. Various potent mantras which are a combination of Sounds and words are prevalent in Hindulore. Those who have mastered them can by chanting them caste various types of spells, different mantras have different effects.

explained that God is one though his manifestations are many and whatever may be the deity one worships it is of one God. Though God can be approached in many ways, only when there is the basic knowledge of unity can the devotee really know God. God can be served in many ways and it has to be recognised that the entire universe is the manifestation of God in various forms. Hence God can be approached only through the principle of universal love and the final culmination of this is that one who is a devotee of God merges himself and his identity with God and sees no difference between himself and God, or for that matter between himself and anybody else. In other words, he sees God not only within himself but in everything else and in everybody else. With this as the basic teaching he attacked practices based on superstition and ignorance such as animal sacrifices which were being performed by a section of the learned of those days to please the so called powerful deities. He cleansed the Bhakti cult of the undesirable practices and established that real Bhakti is that which recognises love as truth and truth as love and God as truth and love.

43. Sankara came to Karnataka in South India along with Sarasawani and Sureswara and on the banks of river Tungabhadra he reached a place of idyllic beauty, called Srīngagiri or Sringeri (as it is called now). Sarasvani who had till now accompanied them stopped here. Sankara stopped also. He established a place for her there so that her presence shall always remain there. Sarasavani returned to her heavenly abode. Sarasvati as Sarada was installed as a deity at that place. And this place became the famous Saradapitha of Sringeri, which to this day continues the great Sankara tradition.



44. It was mentioned earlier that to preserve the Advaita system of philosophy and to spread the light of knowledge Sankara wanted to reduce into writing philosophical and devotional treatises and therefore he wrote various commentaries, devotional poems etc. Sankara felt that it is not merely enough to put down things in writing in the forms of books but what is contained in these writings should be properly understood and there should be a line of teachers who having understood these, live an exemplary life following the true tenets so that the future generations will have the benefit of true knowledge. So great was his compassion not only for the people of his generation but also for posterity. Therefore, he established several centres called "Mutts" for propagation of learning all over India. In each of these Mutts he installed a teacher of eminence who would wear his mantle and will be known as Sankaracharya. Each of these Sankaracharyas of these various Mutts was to continue this tradition in an unbroken line of spiritual succession. Thus to this day we find Sankaracharyas of various Mutts in India and we revere them as great spiritual preceptors who can show us the right path of progress.

45. While he was staying at Sringeri, Sankara Bhagwadpada whom we may now call 'Adi Sankara' or the first Sankaracharya, came to know through intuition that his mother in far away Kaladi was nearing her end. He had promised when he left his mother at the age of eight that he would be by her bedside in her last moments. He remembered it and to keep up that promise he hurried to Kaladi. The pious and noble Aryimba was very happy and at peace at seeing her son by her side during her last moments. The great Acharya now sang hymns in praise of

Lord Vishnu and prayed that this pious lady be received by Him and given deliverance from this sorrowful world. The messengers of Vishnu, as handsome and resplendent as Lord Vishnu Himself and having the same emblems and dress, presented themselves now before Sankara. They had brought the celestial flying chariot for transporting Aryamba to her heavenly abode where she would find lasting peace and happiness.

46. With the death of his mother he had to arrange for the cremation of the dead body. As per his promise to his mother he wanted to do the funeral rites himself. However, according to custom a person who has renounced the world and has become a Sanyasi could not perform such rites. Therefore his relatives and the orthodox people of the village deprecated and condemned his intention of performing the funeral rites by himself as according to them it was against the Sastras. Hence they did not help Sankara in disposing of the dead body. However, undaunted by this rebuff from the superstitious, short-sighted and orthodox villagers, Sankara felt that love and truth are far above narrow ritualism and he therefore carried his mother's body unaided to the garden behind the house and performed the final funeral rites and cremated her body. He thus demonstrated that as an Acharya he would not only lay stress on erudition and good conduct but above all on human feelings and affection towards fellowmen and that love such as the love of a son to his mother and vice versa was sacred.

47. After completing the funeral ceremonies connected with the demise of his mother, Sankaracharya once again set out on his travels for the avowed purpose of fulfilling his life's mission. He toured the length and breadth of

India on foot meeting thousands of scholars, philosophers and leaders of society belonging to different shades of thought. Wherever he went he asserted the supremacy of the Vedas and Advaita. To kindle the flame of devotion to God in the minds of people he installed several "yantras" in various temples to attract there the power and grace of God.

48. In this way he traversed the whole of this vast country four times within his short span of life. These travels have been significantly and symbolically called 'Digvijaya' or the victory over all the quarters and directions. It is difficult to imagine of any one with so great intellectual and spiritual attainments and at the same time with such great compassion for humanity.

49. During one of these travels the Acharya came to the famous temple at 'Mukambi' in Karnataka. The presiding deity in the temple was the powerful Goddess Ambika. With his spiritual powers he was able to draw the power of the deity and contain it in an emblem called 'Srichakra' so that the deity was no longer fierce but benevolent.

50. An interesting incident took place here. One day a Brahmin came to have darshan of Sankaracharya along with his dumb son. Sankara asked this dumb child the question "who are you". Miraculously the child immediately replied in clear tones "I am not this body. I am the all pervading truth". Since this child knew the great truth preached in the vedanta and was keeping it hidden so long like an 'amla' fruit or gooseberry held tight in one's hand, Sankara named this boy "Hasthamalaka" (literally meaning a person with "Amla" in his hands). Not only did Sankara give him such a fitting name but he accepted him also as one of his disciples.

51. Sankara had a number of disciples who were studying under him and were his followers. Padmapada, Sureshwara and Hastamalaka who were among the main disciples, have already been mentioned. Among the disciples there was also another called 'Giri' or Anandagiri, who was the butt of ridicule of the other disciples. Extremely humble and devoted to the Acharya, Giri never used to open his mouth when the Acharya was giving lessons in Vedanta, not even for clearing any doubts. Because of this he came to be regarded as dull and unintelligent and as a person who was not able to understand anything. But Giri never bothered about the superior attitude of his fellow disciples and class-mates towards him or their impression about him. He performed the various tasks assigned to him by his master, Sankaracharya, with great devotion. The other disciples thought that he was fit only to perform menial functions and not fit to receive higher knowledge. Sankara knew this and one day he wanted to show the other disciples the greatness of this apparently dull Giri. One day when the class assembled for lectures and discussions on the Bhashyas, the Acharya did not commence his talk seeing that Giri had not yet come in. The other disciples whispered among themselves and did not want to wait for Giri. They also felt that the Acharya should not make them all wait till Giri arrived. At last Giri came into the class but everyone was surprised for he came singing in a very carefree and happy manner. He sang in all eight verses, all of them composed by himself. When the other disciples heard Giri singing they were astonished because these poems were in praise of Sankaracharya their Guru and were rare compositions full of meaning. Only now did these disciples know the true worth of Giri.

52. The eight slokas were composed in a metre called 'totaka'. Hence Giri was given the name of Totaka and the composition of eight slokas has come to be referred to as 'Totakashtakam'.<sup>19</sup> To this day it is the recitation of this Totakashtakam that is considered to be the best form of worship one could offer the great Sankaracharya.

53. How God himself helped Sankara in his life mission is seen from an incident. During his travels Sankaracharya came to a place called 'Tiruvidadimaruthur'<sup>20</sup> in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu. This place is famous for the great Siva temple where the deity is called Mahalingaswami. The pandits here were learned in the Saiva doctrines. These pandits and scholars believed that it is Lord Siva alone who is the creator, protector and the destroyer of the universe, that the beings including men and women who are mere creations of Siva are insignificant creatures and therefore the Advaita doctrine that

19. In one of the verses of Totakashtakam, Totakacharya says: भवन्व भवानिति सेतितरां समजायत  
चेतसि कौतुकिता,

which means in his heart of hearts, he feels that Sankara is Lord Siva Himself. This is not only an instance of the great devotion of Totakacharya to his master but gives an insight through the devotee's eyes as to who Sankaracharya really was.

20. Called Madhyarjuna in Sanskrit. In this place as well as at Mallikarjuna, the Sivalinga was originally installed under an Arjuna tree, called "Maruthu" in Tamil.

every being and God are one and the same, was not acceptable to them. They told Sankaracharya in no uncertain terms that they cannot accept his teachings unless Lord Siva himself certifies that Advaita is the true religion,

54. Hearing this, Sankara asked them to accompany him to the presence of the deity installed in the temple viz. Lord Siva. The scholars were surprised at the confident way in which Sankara took up the challenge. The scholars now assembled in front of the sanctum sanctorum where Mahalinga was installed. In answer to the prayers of Sankaracharya a voice, sweet and resonant and majestic, was heard emanating from the Linga. Three times the voice declared "Advaita is truth". This was also followed by a hand which was raised above the Linga signifying a sort of affirmation on oath.<sup>21</sup> Seeing this miracle everyone there was astounded. Sankara was deeply moved that God himself should come and help him in this miraculous manner and then and there he composed verses in praise of Mahalinga. The Saivite scholars assembled there readily accepted Sankaracharya as their guru without question and unconditionally.

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21. It will not be out of place to mention here that at the instance of the great living sage of Kanchi, H. H. Chandrasekarendra Saraswati Swami a Mandapa has been built in front of the Sankara Mutt at Tiruvidadimaruthur and in the mandapa a Linga with a hand stretching out has been installed to commemorate the event of Adi Sankara getting approval from Mahalingeswara in support of the Advaita preached by him.

55. Chidambaram was another important place visited by Sankaracharya. In this place, 'Goudapada' the Guru of Sankara's Guru, Govindapada, had studied for a few years under the illustrious Patanjali. Sankaracharya wanted very much to visit this place where his Paramaguru had studied and he therefore went there and offered worship. Sankara also went to the Nataraja temple and installed two yantras there called "Panchakshara Yantra" and "Annakarshana Yantra". Panchakshara is a mantra consisting of five syllables the recitation of which will bring the blessings of Lord Siva. The Yantra is usually a copper plate containing engraving of secret and powerful mantras. Annakarshana Yantra was a device to bring prosperity in the form of increasing yield of crops of food grains.

56. Another place of renown the Acharya visited was Tiravanaikavu in Tiruchi district. In the temple in Tiruvanaikavu the presiding deity is the Goddess in the form of 'Akhilandeshwari'. During Sankara's visit there, this deity was a very powerful deity with terrific powers striking a sort of fear in the minds of people. By his spiritual power of mantras, Sankara was able to draw out the 'Ugratha' or terrifying force of the Goddess into an earring or 'Thatanga' and the ear-rings were offered by Sankara to be put as ornaments for the image of Goddess Akhilandeshwari.

Sankaracharya visited Srirangam also and after worshipping Sriranganatha at the temple there, installed an 'yantra' there also.

57. Some of the other places he visited during his travels in Southern India are Tiruchendur, Madurai,

Kanyakumari, Trivandrum and Tirupati. Tiruchendur is in Tirunelveli district of Tamilnadu where Subrahmanya is the presiding deity. To bring out the greatness of this Subrahmanya Temple Sankaracharya composed a beautiful stotra called 'Subrahmanya Bhujangam'. This Stotra composed by Sankara is credited with curative powers if recited with devotion. Even to-day Vibhuti Prasada or the sacred ashes from this temple if smeared over one's body after reciting Subrahmanya Bhujangam is believed to cure one's illnesses.

58. At Tirupati Sankaracharya was so moved by the darshan of Lord Venkateswara in the temple that he composed in praise of Venkateswara the powerful hymn called 'Vishnupadadi Kesantha Stotram' Here also he installed a yantra for attracting devotees to this temple. So much was he taken in by the beauty and majesty of Lord Venkateswara. No wonder therefore that people have been attracted to this temple over the years in larger and larger numbers for darshan and looking at the vast crowds that flock there for daily darshan, every day has a festival appearance.

59. Sankara visited Puri on the eastern coast of Orissa and offered worship at the Jagannath temple there. Here he established a Mutt and installed Padmapada, one of his disciples, as Acharya there. This seat of Sankaracharya of Puri is generally known as "Govardhana Peeth". Similarly, on the west coast of India at Dwaraka famous for its association with Lord Krishna, Sankara established another Mutt and installed another of his disciples, Hasthamalaka as Acharya there. The Peetha here is known as Sarada-peeth or Kalikapeeth. According to the Acharya param-



para of the Dwaraka Peetha, however, Viswarupacharya, a disciple of Sankara was the first Acharya installed by Sankara.

60. Sankaracharya felt that the bakthi movements must also gain strength and there should be places of great sanctity for worship all over India. With this in view he sang the praise of the twelve Jyotirlingas of Lord Siva situated in different parts of the country. These are Somanatha at Somnath in Saurashtra-Gujarat, Mahakaleswar near Ujjain, Vaidyanatha at Parali—District Beed- Maharashtra, Bhimashankara on the banks of the river Bhima near Poona, Ramanatha at Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu, Naganatha in Darukavanam, identified by some as Aundhya Naganath in Parbhani District of Maharashtra, Viswanatha in Kasi, Triambakeswara at Triambak called Gautamitata near Nasik, Kedarnatha in the Himalayas, Gusruneswara near Aurangabad, Mallikarjuna at Srisaillam in Andhra Pradesh and Omkarnath at Amaleswara in Madhya Pradesh<sup>22</sup>. After identifying these Jyotirlingas Sankara offered worship in these places so that these places can become the centres of religious pilgrimage for devotees for ages to come. He also composed a poem on all the

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सीराष्ट्रे सोमनाथं च श्रीशैले मल्लिकार्जुनम् ।

उज्जयिन्यां महाकालमोक्षारममलेश्वरे ॥

परलया वैद्यनाथं च डाकिन्यां भीमशङ्करम् ।

सेतुमध्ये तु रामेशं नागेशं दारुकावने ॥

वारणस्यां तु विश्वेशं त्र्यम्बकं गौतमीतटे ।

हिमालये तु केदारं घृष्णेशं शिवालये ॥

22, According to Some, Parali Vaidyanatha and Darukavanam are in N. India,

twelve Jyotirlingas combined called "Dwadasa Jyotirlinga Stotram".

61. The place which attracted Sri Sankaracharya very much was Srisailam in Andhra Pradesh. At Srisailam, Jasmine creeper (Mallika creeper) had spread itself on an Arjuna tree and under this tree a Sivlinga was found and was installed and hence the Sivalinga in this place was called Mallikarjuna. Seeing the grandeur of Mallikarjuna Sankaracharya was so overcome by devotion that there flowed from him literally a torrent of prayerful verses—100 verses composed extempore. These have come to be known as 'Sivanandalahari', incomparable as masterpieces of devotional hymns on Lord Siva.

62. Near Mallikarjuna temple in Srisailam there was a place called "Hatakeswaram" which was more or less a deserted place which the Acharya felt would be good for meditation in solitude. Here the Acharya spent a number of days in meditation. A terrible event happened during his stay here. In the forest nearby lived a sect of tribal people called 'Kapalikas'. These people worshipped Siva in a crude form. They used to live near the cremation grounds, wore skulls and bones on their bodies and indulged in animal and human sacrifices to propitiate Siva in the form of Kapali. Since Sankaracharya was against such evil practices like animal and human sacrifices and considered that Godhead cannot be achieved by such sinful rituals and weird ceremonies, the Kapalikas were against Sankara's teachings and against Sankara himself. Sankaracharya, as mentioned already, advocated performance of pooja with true devotion without resort to violence of any kind. The chief of the Kapalikas was therefore waiting for an oppor-

tunity to wreak vengeance upon the great Acharya. He knew that Sankaracharya was a person who had renounced everything, that he had dedicated his life for the service of mankind; and therefore the Kapalika chief felt that if he were to go and ask Sankaracharya to give his consent for being offered as a sacrifice to Kapali, this serene and compassionate saint cannot refuse such a request and with his own consent he can be killed and at the same time he will be earning great merit by offering as human sacrifice a great and good man and thereby secure boons from a well-propitiated "Kapali".

63. So the Kapalika went before the Acharya and put forward his request. Sankaracharya obligingly told him that he has no objection to grant his request and said without fear or other emotion "You want only my head; there is no difficulty at all; you may cut it off yourself and take it. I thought till now that this my body, is useless but now you say that it can be useful to you. Go ahead and cut off my head if you want". Having said this Sankara went into deep meditation again. The Kapalika was immensely pleased that his clever scheme had worked. He now took out his sword and raised it in order to cut off the head of Sankara. However at this moment Padmapada, his disciple, who came rushing saw what was about to happen. Padmapada, as has been mentioned already, was a great devotee of Lord Nrsimha the avatar of Vishnu. He invoked the blessings of Nrsimha now and with the power of Nrsimha he pounced upon the Kapalika Chiefa and literally tore him to pieces in the same manner as Lord Nrsimha had killed Hiranyakasipu. This done Lord Nrsimha who had actually entered the body of Padmapada departed and Padmapada became his old calm self once

again. Sri Sankaracharya knew that Lord Nrsimha had come to his rescue in the form of Padmapada. He composed hymns in praise of Nrsimha and offered worship at the nearby temple of Lord Nrsimha at Ahobila.

64. During his tour of north India, he visited Mathura and Brindavan. He also went to Bharadwaja Ashram and there he met Sage Gaudapada in person and received his blessings. Going westwards he went to Panchala and offered worship at the temple at Jwalamukhi where the Goddess appeared in the form of a column of fire. He next went to Kashmir and engaged the leaders of various schools of thought in debate and won them over. There was in Srinagar on a beautiful Mandapa a thronelike seat called Sarvajna Simhasana or the throne of supreme wisdom. Out of the four entrances to this hall of learning, only the door to the South remained closed indicating that no great person from the south had so far been able to occupy the seat. Sankara decided therefore to enter the mandap through this southern gate to prove that learned people existed in the southern regions also. He had to pass various tests in arguments from various groups of scholars belonging to various schools. He was at last successful and occupying the coveted seat of learning or Sarvajna peetha he earned the admiration and respect of all the great men of learning assembled there. There are several incidents connected with the stay of Sankaracharya in Kashmir but a narration of these incidents is not attempted in a short monograph like the present one.

65. Sankaracharya toured the Himalayan Region and visited many beautiful spots there where great sages and yogis lived. He then reached Badrinath high up in the

Himalayas. When he was staying at Badrinath Lord Vishnu gave darshan to him and exhorted him thus: "On the bed of the river Alakananda nearby you will find an idol of mine embedded in the sand. Remove it from the river bed and install it in a proper place. It has great powers and my presence will be manifest in it." Sankara therefore searched in the river bed and was able to locate the "vigraha" or idol. He then caused a temple to be constructed at Badrinath and installed the idol there. This deity is revered and worshipped by thousands today as "Badrinarayana" and thousands flock to Badrinath every year braving the cold to have darshan. Not only did he instal the deity there but he laid down the procedure of Pujas there. At Badrikasrama, Sankaracharya founded another 'mutt' and this seat was named Jyoti Peeth. He installed Totakacharya as the head of the mutt there.

66. In the Himalayas Sankaracharya reached another sacred place called Kedarnath. Here, by his yogic powers he separated himself from his physical body and set out for Kailasa, the abode of Siva, in his Sukshma-Sarira or astral body. There is some confusion in accounts given of Sankara's life equating this with his attaining "siddhi" at this place. The traditional belief however is that Sankara temporarily renounced his physical body and went to Kailas.

67. Sankaracharya went to Kailasa and worshipped Siva and Parvati there in person. Seeing Siva in person he praised Him in glowing poetry describing Him in detail from the tips of His feet to the top of His head. Not satisfied with this he sang His praise again describing Him

from the top of His head to the tip of His feet in another poem. These two poems are known as "Sivapadadikesa Stotra" and "Sivakesadipada Stotra". Since the great Acharya has described Siva as He actually appeared before him these poems have great significance.

68. The Lord was pleased and gave five "Spatika-lingas" to Sankaracharya. Though the Acharya could praise Siva, he was non-plussed as to how to describe the Goddess Ambika or Parvati who was by His Side. Realising the Acharya's predicament Lord Siva Himself blessed him with "Soundaryalahari", a collection of poems extolling the greatness of Ambika in the Lord's own words.

69. This "Soundaryalahari" is considered to be a master piece among the compositions of Sankaracharya and the recitation of these 100 verses or portions thereof with devotion is believed to confer great and everlasting benefits.

70. On his return from Kailasa, resuming his travels on earth Sankaracharya went to Nepal and to its capital city. He was received with great honours by the King of Nepal himself. Visiting Pasupatinath temple there he offered worship to Lord Siva there who is known as Pasupatinath. He also spent sometime there correcting certain irregularities in the forms of worship and prescribed the correct procedure for offering worship to Lord Siva.

71. Near Pasupatinath there is also another place which is famous as a seat of the Goddess Ambika known here as Guhyeswari. Our Acharya visited this seat of the Goddess also. Also, in Pasupatinath, Sankaracharya

installed one of the five Spatikalingas received from Lord Siva in the Neelakantha temple and offered worship there. The Acharya again went to Kedarnath after leaving Pasupatinath and installed another of the Spatikalingas called 'Muktilinga' in this place.

72. He once again returned to South India and reaching Chidambaram installed another of the five Spatikalingas from Lord Siva. He installed the fourth Linga called "Bhogalinga" at Sringeri. He toured once again various places like Tiruchi, Srirangam, Madurai, Rameswaram etc. Thereafter he came to Kanchi one of the seven places in India reputed for helping one to attain salvation. At the entrance to Kanchi City, King Rējasena welcomed him. During his stay in Kanchi, the Acharya found that Kanchi was the one place where the grace of Goddess Kamakshi was felt in abundance. He felt that if the city were to be refashioned and rebuilt in the shape of a Sri-chakra which is the seat of power of Kamakshi, the entire city and surroundings will have the grace of the Goddess in a far greater measure and this will usher in greater prosperity. The Rāja of Kanchi endorsed the suggestion of the Acharya and rebuilt the city as desired by the Acharya in the new pattern and in the centre of the city was built the magnificent temple of Kamakshi.

73. The Acharya thought that the great power of Kamakshi would be too much for the people of Kaliyuga to bear and they would be even afraid to offer worship. Since our Acharya felt that the Goddess was as compassionate and loving as a mother, approaching her and seeking her blessings, he transferred a portion of the manifested

as well as the latent power of the Goddess into a Sri-chakra and installed it in the temple itself. Thereafter it was found that the Goddess Kamakshi who is full of grace began showering Her blessings on devotees in a greater measure. Even today the grace of Kamakshi is something which is incomparably great and is being experienced by many a devotee.

74. In this place Kanchi where Kamakshi resides in all her glory is the famous Shakti seat of the Goddess called Kamakotipeetha which is recognised as one of the great Shaktipeethas. Here the Acharya established a Mutt over which he himself presided and named this seat also as Kamakoti Peetha. He also kept with him the fifth linga which alone remained to be installed called Yogalinga, for his daily pooja<sup>98</sup> and stayed at Kanchi for sometime worshipping Kamakshi and receiving her blessings and grace.

75. As has already been mentioned, Sankaracharya brought a healthy trend in Bhaktimarga. He constantly battled against the forces of narrow sectarianism which engendered group rivalries taking people away from the path of true devotion. While he accepted that a person may choose a particular deity in a particular pleasing form

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23. It is said that this Yogalinga which Adisankara himself worshipped is the same which has been worshipped by the Sankaracharyas of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetha in unbroken tradition over the centuries and even today, the present Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham worships this very same Yogalinga.



for his own worship as an Ishtadevta, he condemned unseemly rivalries among the followers of the various sects worshipping different deities. He propagated the correct and healthy dictum that God manifests Himself in different forms and in whichever form he is worshipped it cannot be said that one form is superior to another because all are manifestations of the same God. To break down sectarian tendencies and to make the Bhakti cult more broad-based, he gave new meaning and substance to 'Panchayatana Pooja, or the worship of the five deities. According to this everyone will worship all the five forms of God viz. Lord Siva, Goddess Ambika, Lord Vishnu, Ganesa and Surya or Sun. Anyone may choose anyone of these five deities for special worship without neglecting the worship of the other forms. He advocated in fact that worship of all the five should be encouraged so that there will be no group feelings based upon any particular deity one worships. The concept of Panchayatana Poojas was also enlarged by Sankaracharya by the addition of a sixth deity or sixth form of God viz Shanmukha as He was worshipped by a large section of the people. Thus he established the worship of God in six forms called Shanmata and prescribed various procedures of worship for each one of the six deities.

76. He systematised the type and form of Puja or worship so that devotees can obtain maximum benefits and can maximise their devotion. Though an advocate of Advaita, and though he knew God is formless and abstract he also knew that ordinarily it is difficult to visualise God in abstract and that in order to derive emotional satisfaction various forms of worship of different deities in personalised forms have come into existence in Hindu religion to satisfy these requirements and that it is given only to a very few

people who are highly evolved spiritually to get the required concentration and devotion to an abstract and formless God. Sankaracharya felt it necessary to cater to the spiritual needs of the generality of people through proper Bhakti Marga. In establishing the Shanmata, therefore, Sankaracharya, though a votary of pure knowledge and Advaita, could realise the limitations of ordinary people who require not only intellectual satisfaction but emotional satisfaction as well. To propagate the Shanmata or the six fold path of devotion Sankaracharya sent disciples to various parts of India in order that the worship of these six deities could be done by the people in accordance with the Vedic tenets without any debased or vulgar or superstitious or ignorant practices. Because of his contribution to the propagation of Shanmata, Sankaracharya is also referred to as 'Shanmatacharya'.

77. Thus Sankaracharya established the supremacy of the vedas and upanishadas and the great truths contained therein and he convinced various scholars from different parts of the country about the supremacy of Advaita.

78. At Kanchi, Sankaracharya established and ascended the throne of transcendental wisdom and was honoured by Kings and scholars alike.

79. Establishing the supremacy of Vedic religion and Advaita philosophy Sankaracharya banished many different types of false beliefs and false religions and within a period of less than a quarter of a century he achieved something which is impossible for any ordinary human being. He had

travelled<sup>24</sup> the length and breadth of this vast land at least four times in those days when there was practically no speedy means of communication and transportation. He was able to conquer by his rational and scientific approach the forces of darkness and superstition. He met thousands of scholars, reformed and converted several diehard obscurantists among them and infused new life to the paths of knowledge and devotion, made people realise the limits and limitations of ritualism and put a stop to several practices like animal and human sacrifices and cleansed the Hindu religion of bad influences and above all he made people think for themselves and realise that there is divinity in everyone. He expounded and explained the true nature of God viz, God is love and God is truth, that through one's service to one's fellowmen in a spirit of humility and recognising God in every living being, one realises God in oneself. His numerous works and writings and commentaries which are available even to this day stand as a beacon light even after centuries and this will stand the test of time for several thousand years more in future.

80. All these achievements which were truly super human, Sankaracharya regarded not with pride but with humility. He considered all these as possible only because of the grace of Goddess Kamakshi. The time for his depar-

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24. A list of places which are said to have been visited by Sankaracharya is given in Annexure—1.

ture from this world was nearing, He was completing 32 years of earthly existence. He went to Kanchi Kamakshi temple and there he composed in praise of Kamakshi an incomparable poem called 'Tripurasundari Vedapadastavam'. When this poem ended Sankara's earthly life also ended and he attained final union with the Supreme being.<sup>25</sup>

81. A temple for Sankara can be found even today in the Kamakshi temple at Kanchipuram behind the sanctum sanctorum of Kamakshi Herself. The images of Tripurasundari and Chandramouliswara which Sankaracharya was worshipping every day are even now to be seen in the daily pooja of the present Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakotipeetha. The great mutts or seats of learning at

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25. A widely held belief is that Sankaracharya went to Badrinath after finishing his life mission and from there he returned to his original abode in Mount Kailasa extolled by the Devas and the sages who had come down to the earth at the time of his departure from the earth. Another version is that Sankaracharya attained final Samadhi near Kedarnath. A third version is that he attained Samadhi at Vrishachala (Trichur in Kerala). But scholars after a detailed study of various ancient texts, especially "Sivarahasya" and other works are inclined to hold the view that Sankara attained final union with the Supreme Being at Kanchi, on Sukla Ekadasi day of Raktakshi in Kali year 2625 corresponding to 477 B.C.

Puri in the East, Dwarka in the West, Badrikasrama in the North, Kanchi and Sringeri in the South carry on the great traditions of the Acharya through a line of learned Sages and keep the flame of Jnana bright over the centuries.

82. In what way can we attempt to repay the debt of gratitude that we owe to this great Master? To repay the debt in full is impossible. One can only attempt to do something, by doing one's utmost for the preservation and propagation of the vedas and vedic principles, by a study of different systems of philosophy and advaita, by recognising that God is truth and love and by being constantly in search of the great truth without succumbing to the forces of ignorance or darkness and superstitions, and avoiding blind hero worship. One's intelligence must be kept clean and keen, one's senses should not be blunt and one's heart should remain pure. One should never give up the quest for knowledge of the true self.

83. Let us remember the Great Master always. He is the greatest that India has seen. Let us bow down to him in reverence.

श्रुतिस्मृतिपुराणानामालयं करुणालयम्

नमामि भगवत्पादशंकरं लोकशंकरम् ॥

सर्वतन्त्र स्वतन्त्राय सदात्माद्बैतरूपिणे ।

श्रीमते शंकरार्याय वेदान्तगुरवे नमः ॥

आचार्यान् भगवत्पादान् षण्मतस्तापकान् हितान् ॥

परहंसान्मुनोऽद्बैतस्तापकान् जगतीगुरुन् ॥

॥ ओं सत् सत् ॥

## Annexure I

Places visited by Adi Sankaracharya according to various versions of Sankaravijaya.

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| 1. Ahobilam                               | 26. Jagannath Puri                         |
| 2. Allahabad                              | 27. Jwalamukhi                             |
| 3. Amaleswaram                            | 28. Kaladi                                 |
| 4. Anga Desh                              | 29. Kalahasti                              |
| 5. Aundha-Naganath                        | 30. Kamrup (Assam)                         |
| 6. Ayodhya                                | 31. Kanchipuram                            |
| 7. Badrinath                              | 32. Kanyakumari                            |
| 8. Badrikasrama                           | 33. Kasi                                   |
| 9. Bhavanipuram                           | 34. Kedarnath                              |
| 10. Banga Desha (Bengal)                  | 35. Kashmir                                |
| 11. Bhima Sankaram                        | 36. Kurukshetra                            |
| 12. Brindavan                             | 37. Madurai                                |
| 13. Chidambaram                           | 38. Madhyarjunam<br>(Tiruvidaïmarudur)     |
| 14. Dwarka                                | 39. Mathura                                |
| 15. Ganavaram<br>(Ganapatyagramam)        | 40. Magadha                                |
| 16. Gangasagar                            | 41. Mahishmati                             |
| 17. Ghusruneswaram<br>(near Ellora Caves) | 42. Mukambi                                |
| 18. Gautamitata, Triambak                 | 43. Mayapuri                               |
| 19. Gokarna                               | 44. Malwa                                  |
| 20. Gokulam                               | 45. Neelakantakshetra<br>(Kathmandu-Nepal) |
| 21. Gaya                                  | 46. Onkareswar                             |
| 22. Hatakeswaram                          | 47. Prayag                                 |
| 23. Haridwar                              | 48. Pandharpur                             |
| 24. Indraprastha                          | 49. Parli Vaidyanath                       |
| 25. Jambukeswaram<br>(Tiruvanaikavu)      | 50. Rameswaram                             |
|   | 51. Somnath                                |

- |                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 52. Sringeri       | 60. Tondi      |
| 53. Srivali        | 61. Trichur    |
| 54. Srisailam      | 62. Trivandrum |
| 55. Srirangam      | 63. Udipi      |
| 56. Sivaganga      | 64. Ujjain     |
| 57. Tirupati       | 65. Videsha    |
| 58. Tiruchendur    | 66. Vidarbha   |
| 59. Tiruchirapalli |                |

Shri Hemant Kumar Sen in his book Acharya Sankara mentions the following places also as visited by Sankaracharya.

- |                |                           |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| Yaterdhem      | Peshavar                  |
| Uttara Kasi    | Kambodh (in Tibet)        |
| Gonwkh         | Darad (in Kashmir)        |
| Harishankarpur | Takshasila (Taxila)       |
| Tulabhavani    | Naimisaranya (near        |
| Mallapur       | Lucknow)                  |
| Marughna       | Mithila                   |
| Magadhapura    | Nalanda                   |
| Yamaprashta    | Rajgriha                  |
| Girnar         | Tamralipta (Tamluk)       |
| Prabhaspatan   | Somatata                  |
| Kankan         | Gour                      |
| Gurjar         | Poundravardhan (Rajshahi) |
| Sind           | Dhobac                    |
| Pragyolishpur  | Kamrup                    |
| Kankhal        | Gandhara (Kandahar)       |

## Annexure II

### Works attributed to Adi Sankaracharya

1. **Brahmasutra Bhashya** (An exposition of and commentary on Bhrama Sutras of Bhagvan Veda Vyasa):
2. **Bhashya or Commentary on**
3.        -do-        Isopanishad
4.        -do-        Kenopanishad
5.        -do-        Mandukyopanishad
6.        -do-        Kathopanishad
7.        -do-        Prasnopanishad
8.        -do-        Mundakopanishad
9.        -do-        Chhandogyopanishad
10.       -do-        Brahadaranyopanishad
11.       -do-        Nrsimha Poorva
12.       -do-        Tapaneeyopanishad
13.       -do-        Taittiriyanopanishad
14.       -do-        Aithareyanopanishad
15.       -do-        Srimad Bhagavad Gita
16.       -do-        Vishnu Sahasranamam
17.       -do-        Sanat Sujatiyam
18.       -do-        Mandukyopanishad
19.       -do-        Karika
20. **Viveka Choodamani**
21. **Atma Bodha**
22. **Aparokshanubhuti**
23. **Vakyavritti**
24. **Brahmanuchintanam**



22. Prasnottara Ratnamalika
23. Adwaitanubhuti
24. Swatmanirupanam
25. Sarva Vedanta Siddhanta Sara Samgraha
26. Prabhoda Sudhakaram
27. Adwaita Pancharatnam
28. Swatma Prakasika
29. Laghu Vakya Vritti
30. Nirvanashtakam
31. Manisha Panchakam
32. Yogataravali
33. Upadesa Panchakam
34. Nirvana Manjari
35. Dhanyashtakam
36. Yati Panchakam
37. Tattvopadesam
38. Eka Sloki
39. Dasa Sloki
40. Sata Sloki
41. Maya Panchakam
42. Prapancha Saram
43. Proudhanubhuti

### PRAYERFUL HYMNS

44. Sri Ganesha Pancharatnam
45. Sri Ganesa Bhujangam
46. Sri Siva Bhujangam
47. Sri Subrahmanya Bhujangam

48. Sri Sivananda Lahari
49. Dwadasalinga Stotram
50. Siva Padadi Kesanta Varnanam
51. Siva Kesadi Padanta Varnanam
52. Veda Saara Siva Stotram
53. Sivaparadhakshamapana Stotram
54. Suvarna Mala Stuti
55. Dasa Sloki Stuti
56. Dakshinamurtyashtakam
57. Sivapanchakshara Stotram
58. Sivanamavalyshtakam
59. Uma Maheswara Stotram
60. Mrtyunjaya Manasa Puja Stotram
61. Gurvedashtakam
62. Kasi Panchakam
63. Ardhanari Natesa Stotram
64. Ananda Lahari
65. Soundarya Lahari
66. Devi Bhujangam
67. Tripurasundari Veda Pada Stotram
68. Tripurasundari Manasa Puja Stotram
69. Tripurasundaryashtakam
70. Devi Shastyupachara Pooja Stotram
71. Lalita Pancharatnam
72. Bhavani Bhujagam
73. Mantra Matruka Pushpa Mala Stavam
74. Navaratnamalika
75. Hanumat Pancharatnam

76. Sri Rama Bhujanga Prayata Stotram
77. Sri Lakshmi Nrsimha Pancharatnam
78. Sri Lakshmi Nrsimha Karunarasa Stotram
79. Sri Vishnu Bhujanga Prayata Stotram
80. Sri Vishnu Padadi Kesanta Stotram
81. Sri Shatpadi Stotram
82. Sri Pandurangashtakam
83. Sri Achutashtakam
84. Sri Krishnashtakam
85. Sri Govindashtakam
86. Sri Haristuti
87. Bhagavan Manasa Puja
88. Mohamudgaram
89. Kanakadhara Stotram
90. Annapoornashtakam
91. Meenakshi Pancharatnam
92. Sarada Bhujanga Prayata Stotram
93. Meenakshi Stotram
94. Narmadashatakam
95. Gangashtakam
96. Yamunashtakam
97. Kalabhairavashtakam
98. Bhramarambashtakam
99. Nirguna Manasa Puja
100. Lalita Trisati Bhashyam

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